



Office of Civil Rights

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REAL-TIME CAPTIONING

What is “real-time captioning” and when is it used?

Captions, composed of text, are used by people who are Deaf or hard of hearing to access content delivered by spoken words and sounds. Captions can also benefit individuals who understand the written better than the spoken word in presentations.

Real-time captions, or Computer Assisted Real-time Translation (CART), are created as an event takes place. A captioner (often trained as a court reporter or stenographer) uses a stenotype machine with a phonetic keyboard and special software. A computer translates the phonetic symbols into captions almost instantaneously and displays them on a laptop or on a large display screen. A slight delay may occur because of the captioner's need to hear and enter the words and the computer's processing time.

Real-time captioning are used for programs that have no written scripts or captions. They can be used for classes; meetings; and live events, such as court proceedings or council meetings.

Although most real-time captioning has been estimated to be well over ninety percent accurate, the audience will see occasional errors. The captioner may misunderstand a word, hear an unfamiliar word, or there may be an error in the software dictionary.

Why use real-time captioning?

Under disability access laws, King County must ensure “equally effective communication.” Many people who are Deaf or hard of hearing grew up hearing or were educated in an “oral tradition”, and do not know sign language. Not all Deaf or hard of hearing people find assistive listening devices to be effective. For these individuals, captioning may provide an effective way of communication – seeing what is said.

How much does real-time captioning cost?

As for any accommodation, costs will vary based on the source of the service and circumstances of the assignment. Some captioners charge \$100 for a half day (3½ hours), while others may charge up to \$130 per hour, depending upon the assignment. Some may have a two-hour minimum charge and/or an additional mileage charge. As for contracting any service, it is best to find out all details of potential charges prior to confirming a real-time captioning assignment.

Who can be contacted for CART services?

King County Superior Court

Linda K. Ridge, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
206-205-2582, linda.ridge@kingcounty.gov

King County District Court

Patricia Kohler, South Division Director
206-255-5068, patricia.kohler@kingcounty.gov

Washington State Captioners

DeafWeb Washington, www.deafweb.org/signlang.htm#captioners

Resource – U.W. DO-IT Program, www.washington.edu/doiit
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